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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the educational role of newspapers in increasing participation in the presidential nomination process. Democratic caucus coverage in 9 daily Missouri newspapers (out of 44 dailies in the state) was examined for the inclusion of concrete, participatory information about the 1992 caucus. Newspapers published over a 5-day period (3 days before the caucus, the day of the caucus, and the day after) were examined. Results indicated that: (1) articles in the dailies with weekend editions were not prominently displayed and provided incomplete information about participation in the caucus; (2) the two competing daily newspapers provided basic information to encourage participation; and (3) the one paper that published only during the week (the "Maryville Daily Forum" with a circulation of 4,000) provided first-rate information. (Four figures of data are included. Contains 22 references.) (RS)

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Empowering the reader:
Learning from 1992 caucus coverage in Missouri newspapers

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Empowering the reader:
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> Super Tuesday is just around the corner. But all Pat Przybysz has time to think about is today -- not candidates, not caucuses, not primaries, not promises. . . . there is precious little time to think of herself, let alone politics.
>
> "Voices of the Voters," *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, March 8, 1992

Przybysz is a single mother working two jobs to support her family. She has no interest in politics because she has no time, explains a *Post-Dispatch* article on the Sunday before Missouri's Democratic caucus. If Przybysz is a typical citizen, time is a factor in participating in the nomination process.

American democratic theory suggests that participation in the election process is a prerequisite for continuation of the democratic form of government. In a society ruled by representative government, Rousseau's concept of "general will" or collective body for the common good of all (Rousseau in *Social Contract*, 1960, p. 181) suggests that because Americans do not directly vote on legislation, involvement in the choosing of their representatives is imperative to maintaining a society that not only reflects citizens' wishes but also can serve citizens' needs. On the surface, it would appear that voting in national elections and the nomination process would be one of the most vital participatory tools.

In the 1988 presidential election, roughly 50 percent of the nation's voting-age population voted with about 20 percent of the eligible voters participating in the

nomination contests (Cook, 1991). About 55 percent voted in the 1992 general election (*St. Louis Post Dispatch*, November 5, 1992). Participation has decreased since a modern high of 65.4 percent in 1960 (Teixeira, 1987, 3-7).

Although the reasons for nonparticipation in the electoral process are varied, newspapers could help reduce citizens' scarce resource of time and use newspapers' educational role to enlighten readers about caucus or primary participation. Solutions to the role of newspapers in improving participation are often vague (Boylan, 1991). Some assert that newspapers could do a better job by writing not only about politicians but also the basic institutions and their struggles (Broder, 1992). But citizens may need more concrete details than just issue and candidate information (Lemert, 1981). Citizens can be empowered to participate with concrete information on <u>how</u> to be part of the process. In primaries/caucuses, the local media have an advantage over national media in getting the message out about a candidate (Hoyt, 1988), but newspapers also can perform a democratic service by communicating concrete, participatory information on how to join in the process. This service is especially important because local political parties' importance has lessened.

This paper explores the educational role of newspapers in increasing participation in the nomination process. Representative Missouri newspapers were examined for inclusion of concrete, participatory information about the 1992 Democratic Caucus. Missouri was an especially good state to study because its type of nomination contest switched from a caucus in 1984, to a primary in 1988, and back again to a caucus in 1992. Thus voter participation figures varied from 40,000 in 1984 to 500,000 in 1988 (Cook) to 13,000 in the 1992 caucus (Missouri State Democratic Headquarters). Questions asked in this analysis include: What are the public policy problems of

nonparticipation? What are the differences between voting in the general election and nomination contests? How well did Missouri newspapers provide concrete information? What is the future?

What are the public policy problems of nonparticipation?

Honest involvement of the public in the nomination process is a relatively new development in American history. Hubert Humphrey's 1968 presidential-bid loss -- after losing the primaries but winning the nomination with party bosses' aid -- was the turning point for reform (Achen, 1989). The McGovern-Fraser Commission changed the process by taking steps to include young people, women, and minorities. Later, the Democratic Party barred states from using the winner-take-all system of delegate selection. Although the new rules were not meant to increase the number of state primaries, applying the rules to caucuses and conventions was so complicated that more primaries were born because they were easier to manage (Walker, 1988).

With open nominations, participation should be higher. Nonvoting may not pose a serious threat to democracy, but nonvoting could be a problem for two reasons (Bennett and Resnick, 1990). First, analysts cannot predict the negative effect of nonparticipation on democracy's stability if economic calamity or social upheaval happens again. Second, nonvoters become more like "subjects" rather than citizens because political elites only listen to opinions of those who vote.

Decline in participation is attributed to theories that range from a need to improve registration procedures (Wolfinger, 1991) to the deterioration of the quality of political life such as the parties, candidates, and media (Gans, 1990). The decline of the parties has three negative effects on voting (Wattenberg, 1990). One, parties can not develop

comprehensive programs, and thus voters will retreat to extreme left and right tendencies with strident single-issue groups. Two, democracy becomes increasingly negative as policy compromises become more difficult. Three, the presidency is overextended with the president looking directly for support from a majority of voters and using demagoguery to achieve his/her wishes for a personal government. The 1992 campaign suggests that this observation may be true with the Ross Perot, David Duke, and Pat Buchanan presidential candidacies. Americans may have been unhappy with both parties and were searching for alternatives with extremist views such as Duke and Buchanan. Although Perot cast his presidential bid in terms of "the people's candidate," his candidacy suggested an imperial presidency of a billionaire who not only was willing to spend his own money to be elected but also may have excluded Congress in the "ruling" of the country.

What are the differences between voting in the general election and nomination contests?

Some general differences between nomination contests and general elections suggest the need for improved coverage (Rothenberg and Brody, 1988). The importance of individual nomination contests vary far more widely than for general elections. Candidate viability fluctuates more than in the general election, and the importance of the general election is constant as opposed to the salience of nomination contests in determining who gets the nomination. For example, a candidate may "lose" in one state's primary but a week later "win" in another. In a general election, however, there is only one winner. Also, often there is little difference between same-

parties/different candidates' issue stances in nomination contests (Flanigan and Zingale, 1991). This similarity in issue stances leads to a preoccupation with candidates' personalities and imagery that carries into the general election.

In each presidential election cycle, the nomination games and rules change while the fall election remains constant. For example, the big nominating news in 1988 was Super Tuesday. But in 1992, this event was scaled back and included other regional votes on different days in the Rocky Mountain states and the industrial Midwest. The number of primaries grew from 17 in 1968 to 40 in 1992. Missouri and Virginia returned to caucuses after abandoning that method for primaries in 1988. Missouri had changed to a primary in 1988 to advance native son Richard Gephardt's candidacy (Cook). Colorado and Washington held their first primary in 1992. Minnesota held its first presidential primary since 1956, but Vermont returned to the caucus form because caucuses are cheaper than primaries. North Dakota held an open Democratic caucus and an open Republican primary.

The costs of voting are greater in nomination contests because less information is available and partisanship does little to ease costs when choosing candidates in primaries (Geer, 1989, Ch. 3). The direct primary is a more complicated electoral device than the general election, thus confusing citizens and adding to their information costs.

General election and nomination voters are different in two ways (Flanigan and Zingale, 137). First, nomination voters are usually strongly partisan and may even support a candidate they perceive has the best chance of winning the general election. Second, there is a bandwagon momentum or tendency in nomination contests to support a candidate because of the perception that the candidate appears to be gaining support.

Little has been written about the differences between caucus and primary voters,

but some guesses can be made. Briefly, during a caucus evening, a voter first listens to nomination speeches. Then the voter chooses a caucus -- or group -- of other voters who support the same candidate. The voter sits or stands with that caucus. If a candidate does not get 15 percent of the total group's votes, other candidates' supporters try to convince the unviable caucus to join the other candidates' caucuses. Caucuses involve more time costs because voters must spend the whole evening in the nomination process. A younger caucus voter needs to hire a baby sitter. Caucus participants must be willing to attend a meeting where they may not know anyone and declare their allegiance, but primaries are anonymous. Caucuses involve more levels of decision making than primaries. Participants may feel that their votes are worth less than in a caucus after the delegate-choice process weaves its way from precinct to county to region to state conventions. Plus, if a voter's original desired candidate does not meet the 15 percent threshold during the caucus, the voter must make a second decision for another candidate on the spot. No "real" votes are taken anywhere in the process of a caucus (Winebrenner, 1987).

Voters in both caucuses and primaries have no control over extrinsic or elite-level activities, but those outside-the-voter factors may affect whether voters will make the decision to participate (Norrander, 1991 and Norrander, 1986). Elite-level activities center around strategic campaign factors -- evident in candidate strategies and media attention -- and rules under which the nomination contests are conducted. For example, an elite-level activity includes presidential candidates trying to demonstrate strong appeal through primaries by using comprehensive media coverage and bypassing party leadership (Winebrenner).

Complicated procedural rules that vary from state to state could directly influence

turnout (Norrander and Smith, 1985). If a primary is closed, it reduces the benefits of voting by preventing registered partisans from casting ballots for their most preferred candidate if that candidate is running in the opposite party's primary. Or if delegate names are listed on the ballot rather than a simple preference primary, costs of voting are higher.

With caucuses or primaries taking place only every four years, supplying readers with concrete information on participation is especially useful for five reasons. First, election participation is more traditional than caucuses/primaries. Because open caucus/primary participation has only been encouraged since 1968, the nomination process may not be understood by citizens as such a major part of our democratic process. Second, because the nomination process takes place early in the election cycle, many voters have not yet "warmed up" to the candidates. Third, it is possible that the nomination process requires a more sophisticated set of "sorting out" skills than the election. Citizens must first determine if their state is having a primary or caucus (or both) and whether it is open or not. If it is open, voters need to determine whether independents may participate. Out of the 15 states in 1992 with caucuses, four of those had different Republican and Democrat processes (Cook). For example, Idaho Democrats had an open caucus while the Republicans had an open primary.

After determining whether their state has a primary or caucus, citizens have to know date, time, and place. In addition, they need to know the process. For example in a primary, citizens vote on presidential hopefuls, but a local precinct caucus is just the first step in picking a state's delegates. Also, a new Democratic rule requiring that all publicly-elected delegates be apportioned according to the candidates' share of the primary or caucus vote after reaching the required 15 percent threshold changed the

process. Previously, extra delegates went to the winning candidate.

Fourth, a caucus may require a more sophisticated set of democratic participation skills than a primary because voters must use more of their own time in the political process, such as securing baby sitters and missing other meetings. Caucuses are not for the extremely shy voter who often must enter a room of strangers and declare allegiance by standing or sitting with a candidate's caucus. Finally, nomination voters must sort through many candidates and play the "Is the candidate electable?" game.

Thus, primaries and caucuses take a high amount of political sophistication, but caucus attenders take more risks than primary participants in terms of time. For them, concrete information is especially needed.

How well did Missouri newspapers provide concrete information?

The researcher examined Democratic caucus coverage in nine daily Missouri newspapers of the 44 dailies in the state. The papers represented different geographical regions and the two major urban centers of the state. Both Columbia papers were included because they are competing daily newspapers, a rarity in most cities. The papers were *Kirksville Daily Express/News; Columbia Tribune, Columbia Missourian, St. Louis Post Dispatch; Poplar Bluff Daily American Republic, Sikeston Standard Democrat, Springfield News Leader, Kansas City Star,* and *Maryville Daily Forum.* Circulation ranged from 4,000 to 562,000.

What information was needed for educated participation? First, voters needed to know information such as date, time, and place of caucus. In addition, they needed to know that caucus doors closed promptly at 7:30. Other useful information was the fact

that March 10 was only the date for the Democratic caucuses. The Republican caucuses were April 14.

Second, voters needed information on how to register if the citizen had not yet registered locally. In Columbia, wards had been redrawn, and citizens needed to check if they had doubts about their new ward. Other information needed was the fact that Missouri has an open caucus system. Citizens do not register by party. So as long as voters were willing to vow that they were Democrats and that they would not participate in another party's nomination process, they could participate.

Third, would-be voters also should have been informed of the process of the evening and how participants would divide into a caucus to support their candidates after the nominating speeches. A candidate's supporters had to receive 15 percent of the vote to be a viable caucus. Also, the new national Democratic rule that publicly elected delegates had to be apportioned according to the candidates' shares of the primary/caucus vote after a candidate had reached the 15 percent threshold should have been explained. Extra Democratic delegates were not awarded to the winning candidate even though the Republicans did allow the winner-take-all system of allocating delegates in their caucuses (Cook). Voters needed to know that the precinct caucuses were first in a four-tier process of precinct, county, district, and state conventions in choosing delegates to the national convention in New York.

Papers were examined for five days -- Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday (caucus day, March 10), and Wednesday. If readers only purchased a Sunday paper, information needed to be included in a weekend paper. For example, the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* has a daily circulation of 350,000 and a Sunday circulation of 562,000. Some of the smaller papers have a publishing schedule that did not include Saturday or

Monday. If a paper did not publish on Monday, publishing information on Tuesday -- especially if an evening paper -- was not very helpful. Ideally, dailies should have published information both on the weekend preceding the primary and a weekday -- Monday or Tuesday -- before the primary. Another element checked was whether local stories, rather than wire stories, were included in the coverage.

If the participatory information was not on the front page or its continuation, it was usually found in a special section like the METRO of the *Post Dispatch*. Editorials or issue articles were not examined because analyzing information about candidates and issues was not the goal of this study but rather the inclusion of participatory information. Comparisons are made among papers based on publishing patterns rather than circulation numbers.

Dailies with weekend editions

Weekend information before Super Tuesday would have been important for people who did not receive the paper during the week. For weekend subscribers, a weekend paper was their only hope of receiving concrete information on the caucus. In general, of the eight papers published on the weekend (see Figures 1 and 2), two papers were not explicit about the March 10 primary date. Six of the eight papers gave the starting time, and only two papers gave location of caucuses. The Republican date was not given on the weekends, and only one paper mentioned that voters needed to be on time or they would be locked out.

Only two papers gave information on the need to be registered -- The *Columbia Daily Tribune* and the *Springfield News Leader*. The *Tribune* said to call the Boone County Elections office before 5 p.m. on Tuesday. However, no phone number or

location was given. Because Columbia had redrawn its boundary sites, voters needed to know how to find out about their new wards. The *Tribune* reported, "Art Auer, director of elections for Boone County said that anyone unsure of where to go can call his office to find the right ward." No phone number or location was given for his office, nor was a city map with the new boundaries included.

The Sunday *Columbia Missourian* contained a very complete section on caucuses with meeting places, process, issues, history, etc., but the whole section was buried in "Ideas," a tabloid opinion section. The section would have been missed by anyone who does not read the opinion section or who is not a news junkie. This special section -- or at least some of the most vital information -- should have been in the front-page section. The *Missourian* did print much of this information later in the week, but their Sunday readers missed out on it.

Six of the eight papers did not explain that the March 10 caucus was open. Of the eight papers, four explained the 15 percent rule or procedure of the evening, and five explained how this was a part of the process to the national convention in New York. Five of the eight papers had local stories. The *Columbia Daily Tribune* also had a glossary on the front page that contained definitions of delegate, caucus, pledge, nominating speech, and viable and unviable caucus.

The two major urban centers -- Kansas City and St. Louis -- publish morning dailies. The *Kansas City Star* did not have any concrete information on the weekend before the caucus, meaning 93,000 Sunday subscribers had to seek other sources on participation. On Monday, *The Star* included an excellent caucus guide, a color graphic that explained how the process worked. This was on page B-1 of the "Metropolitan" section. The article, "Missouri Caucus Guide," explained four steps of the process.

Step one -- next to a clock set at 7:30 -- gave time, place, and the information that any registered voter willing to declare as a Democrat could vote and that names and addresses would be checked against voter registration. Steps two and three explained the process of the evening and the 15 percent rule, and step four explained the cycle ending in the national convention. Also the words, "Please see list of caucus sites" was very prominent. Tuesday's paper included concrete information in the front section on A7, plus the fact that the Republican primary would be April 14.

The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* did a better job of alerting its weekend readers. The Saturday paper said Missouri would hold its caucus in a story compiled from news services. The Sunday paper listed sites in the "St. Louis Section" with special boxes of how the caucuses would work with six steps. This was excellent information, but there needed to be a blurb or teaser on the front page alerting readers to placement of the information in the other section.

The *Springfield News Leader*, a Gannett paper, had essentially no information on the weekend. On Sunday, page 11A, Missouri was simply listed under Super Tuesday with a one liner, "Missouri Democratic Caucuses." The Monday morning paper had two wire and news service stories on the nationwide nomination race with no mention of the Missouri caucus. The Tuesday morning paper had a national article by Gannett News Service on the front page with a small teaser, "Missouri race/3A." There also was a national map showing that Missouri was having a Democratic caucus. The local story on page 3A gave time, first step in process, explanation of 15 percent rules and open caucus, and the Republican date. Although the article said Greene County would have seven caucus meetings, only three were mentioned in the context of the story at the end of the article: "Former Green County Commissioner Earl Slavens said he will back

Brown at a caucus at Jeffries Elementary School because of Brown's ideas on the environment." Four sites were not even mentioned in the context of the story.

The *Kirksville Daily Express/News* included its information in a front page column under "Newsbriefs." "Kirksville, All Democrats in Adair County interested in participating in the delegate selection process should meet at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, March 10 for a county mass meeting." No place of meeting was given. The Monday paper had no local stories or specific information. The Tuesday paper (evening paper) had no more information about the place of the caucus. The Wednesday paper had a local story and photo of the caucus. The story, "Democratic Caucus Splits Vote" told at the end of the article where the caucus took place and explained the caucus' purpose and process. This information needed to be in papers before the caucus, not the day after.

The *Poplar Bluff Daily American Republic* had a community calendar but did not list the caucus. A story on page 3A ended with "Missouri Democrats are to conduct caucuses at 249 sites on Tuesday, the first step toward congressional district and state conventions that will eventually yield 86 delegates to the party's national convention July 13-16 in New York." However, no time or place was given. The Monday paper did list the caucus on the calendar with the words, "Butler County Democratic Presidential Caucus, 7:30 p.m., Butler County Courthouse; all registered voters welcome." This was useful information although it was in an inconspicuous spot. However, it could have explained that if you were a Republican, you would have to vow not to participate in the Republican nomination process. On Tuesday, the caucus was again listed in the community calendar. The Wednesday paper devoted an entire front page to caucus coverage including one local story, "5 of Butler County's 7 Delegates Go to Clinton." The local story discussed the caucus and that 125 Democrats

showed up on a cold night that competed with the Raiders basketball game and a concert by the Woody Herman Orchestra. The voters also had to compete with lack of information.

The *Sikeston Standard Democrat* masthead states that it serves Scott, New Madrid, Mississippi, and Stoddard counties. On the back of the Sunday front-page section was a box about the Missouri Democratic Caucuses that listed "at stake" rules, date, time, and county delegate allocations. It did not list where the caucuses met. The Monday paper had no information nor did the Tuesday paper. The Wednesday front-page article explained the caucuses as the first step of the process.

These papers needed to be more complete about information and not assume readers could figure out by themselves where the caucuses met. Articles also were not prominently displayed. Timing is crucial, and the Wednesday after-the-fact stories are easier to write because a reporter only has to show up at a caucus and report what happened. But more local stories with concrete information were needed before the caucus.

Figure 1. Dailies with no Saturday paper

Columbia Missourian (circulation 5,000)
Poplar Bluff Daily American Republic (circulation 15,000)
Sikeston Standard Democrat (circulation 9,000 daily and 10,000 Sunday)
Kirksville Express/News (circulation 8,700).

All are evening except Columbia Missourian. Numbers given are the number of papers that included the information.

	Sat.	Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.
Date		4*+	1#	2	
Time		3		2	1
Place		1		2	
Republican date			1		

Arrive early			1	
How to register			1	
How to determine ward			1++	
Open caucus				
Process/purpose	2		1	1
How fits in process to N.Y.	2		1	2
Local story	2	1	1	3

*Columbia Missourian -- all information in opinion section, separate tabloid, none on front page
+Poplar Bluff Daily -- information buried on page 3A, nonlocal story
#Poplar Bluff Daily-- Community Calendar, no separate story
++Missourian -- told that wards redrawn but no phone number to find out new ward

Figure 2. Papers that publish every day

Springfield News Leader (circulation 60,000 daily and 99,000 Sunday)
Kansas City Star (circulation 323,000 daily and 416,000 Sunday)
St. Louis Post Dispatch (circulation 350,000 daily and 562,000 Sunday)
Columbia Daily Tribune (circulation 17,000)

The first three are morning papers, and the Columbia Daily Tribune is evenings on weekdays and mornings on weekends.

	Sat.	Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.
Date		2	3	1	
Time		2	3	1	
Place		1	3		
Republican date				1	
Arrive early		1	2		
How to register		1*	1		
How to determine ward		1*	1+		
Open caucus			1	1	
Process/purpose		1	1	1	
How fits in process to N.Y.		2**	1	1	
Local story		2	3	1	

*Columbia Daily Tribune gave names of offices where to register and to find out if in new wards, but it did not list phone numbers.
+Columbia Daily Tribune told where to look on voter identifications cards to determine precinct.
**Columbia Daily Tribune also gave glossary of caucus terms.

Competing Daily Newspapers

Circulation for the *Columbia Daily Tribune* and *Columbia Missourian* is quite different (17,000 vs. 5,000, see Figure. 3); however, the papers consider themselves rivals for complete coverage of the city. Concrete information for the weekend was quite good in both papers. Both gave date and time with the *Missourian* giving a comprehensive list of meeting sites and the *Tribune* explaining to arrive early. If a voter read both papers, quite complete information was available. However, as mentioned earlier, the *Missourian*'s complete weekend coverage was in the pull-out opinion section.

Date, time, place, and early arrival was included in the Monday *Tribune* paper and the Tuesday *Missourian* morning paper. Information on registering and determining wards was weaker. Skeletal information was included, but if one needed to find out how to register or determine a ward, this was not included. Both papers did include process and purpose information on the caucus.

In general, both of these papers did a good job of at least providing basic information to encourage participation. Voters would have been able to arrive at the caucus site at the right time on the right day. But once at the site, they may not have been able to participate if they were in the wrong ward or their registration was not up to date.

Figure 3. Comparison of competing daily newspapers

Columbia Daily Tribune (circulation 17,000) and Columbia Missourian (circulation 5,000).
Tribune is evening paper except for weekends, and Missourian publishes every morning except Saturday. T=Tribune and M=Missourian

	Sat.	Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.
Date		T,M	T	M	
Time		T,M	T	M	
Place		M	T	M	
Republican date					
Arrive early		T	T	M	
How to register		T	T	M	
How to determine ward		T	T	M	
Open caucus				M	
Process/purpose		T,M		M	
How fits in process to N.Y.		M		M	
Local story		T,M	T,M	M	T,M

Daily paper during week only

One of the nine papers publishes only during the week -- the *Maryville Daily Forum* (Figure 4). Date, time, place, and Republican date were included in a front-page top right article on Monday, "Party to Caucus Tuesday." The article also said for further information on the caucus to call a certain name and phone number. However, because this sentence was immediately after the mention of the Republican date, this information could have confused readers about whether it was for the Republican or Democratic caucus. Readers also were told how the process fit in with the national convention. Open caucus and registration information also were given. There was no Tuesday coverage, but this is an evening paper. Wednesday's paper explained the process of the evening in a local story along with who won the caucus and a photo of the caucus gathering.

Voters reading this paper received first-rate information. It was given the day

before the caucus, was complete, and was prominent on the front-page top right section. Considering the size of the paper, this might have enabled many to participate. Information not included was the process of the evening.

Figure 4. No weekend, evenings only on weekdays

Maryville Daily Forum (circulation, 4,160)

	Sat.	Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.
Date			1		
Time			1		
Place			1		
Republican date			1		
Arrive early					
How to register			1		
How to determine ward					
Open caucus			1		
Process/purpose					1
How fits in process to N.Y.			1		
Local story			1		1

In general, adequate coverage was not dependent on size because the *Maryville Daily Forum* did an excellent job and only had a circulation of 4,000. The two competing newspapers -- *Columbia Tribune* and *Columbia Missourian* -- provided good information as did the two largest papers, the *Kansas City Star* and the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch.* More Missouri newspapers would need to be studied for more conclusive results. However, a participating model of fulfilling newspapers' educational role could be built based on the categories used above.

What is the future?

Newspapers are an excellent medium to include information on how to participate in nomination contests because specific information such as date, time, place, and process are different from the general election. Having this information "in hand" saves time and worry for nomination voters. Although there is no guarantee that voters will use the information, feelings of empowerment can multiply if citizens at least know how and where to participate at the grassroots level.

Although caucuses require a higher degree of sophistication, primaries also can be intimidating because the dates vary from state to state and voters may not understand party rules on the votes. If other states -- like Missouri -- switch back and forth between the two processes, then newspapers will have to be ahead of the game, know the differences between needed information levels, and be able to adapt concrete information to the type of nomination contest.

For many of the smaller papers, providing graphics and information on the scale of larger papers, such as the *Kansas City Star*, is difficult. But this information could be available through the state press associations in camera-ready packets. The same type of packet could be available to chain-owned newspapers. Community newspapers could adapt the copy and graphics to explain the caucus or primary process.

The shape of presidential politics is changing as voters call toll-free numbers to voice opinions or to "vote." However, these direct democracy practices can become a tool of special interests to the exclusion of many voters who have opinions but would not pick up the telephone for that purpose. The open nomination system is an excellent check and balance for a democracy ruled by extremist or special-interest viewpoints. Newspapers can play a large educational role in encouraging and empowering the voter.

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